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ABSTRACT

All colleges and universities should be considering how they will incorporate global aspects of education and society into their curricula. The degree of program development will depend upon the goals and missions of each campus, but the programs should build from each campus' strength. The purpose of this paper is to discuss: (1) the principles for program development for global education at the Ramapo College of New Jersey (Mahwah); (2) the strategies that may be used for attracting the professional interests of its faculty; (3) the criteria for assessing the impact of such programs; and (4) how individual states can influence the program. At Ramapo College international and multicultural themes are to be included throughout the curriculum, and extracurricular activities such as internships and field studies are to reflect these themes while faculty participation is encouraged through research programs. Assessment of the program's impact can be seen through the Board of Trustees' commitment and the participation of faculty and students. Several states have issued recommendations for global education to schools and colleges, and these recommendations may be included when developing the program. (DJC)

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POSITIONING GLOBAL EDUCATION FOR THE 1990S:

STRATEGIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

by

Robert A. Scott

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Positioning Global Education for the 1990s:
Strategies for Higher Education
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Introduction

Is there a region of the country where international education has not been studied in recent years? It seems that nearly every part of the U.S. has been the host of a study concerning international education and business.

This interest in the international, or global, aspects of education and society has been growing. At first focussed on the political and military aspects of national security, the interest is now based on issues of economic competitiveness and the need for an informed citizenry. The economic reasons are compelling. Nearly every aspect of our economy is affected by the actions of other nations--from the price and selection of cars, to the mortgage rates we pay, to the foods we eat.

Eighty percent of all American-made goods compete with international rivals. And services are not immune: 50% of the revenues of U.S. advertising firms and one-third of Big 8 accounting firm fees are from overseas.

Numerous national and regional reports have urged that colleges and universities give greater attention to global concerns for reasons of quality and relevance, economic competitiveness, and the need for foreign language competence and international knowledge if we are to have a properly informed citizenry.

In addition, several accrediting groups, and notably the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, have established expectations and standards for international education. The various disciplines have become ever more international in scope--whether they are concerned about literature or sociology or environmental studies. Indeed, there is now an apparent convergence of interest among policy leaders, faculty, students, and administrators in making the global dimensions of college study more evident.* But how should this be accomplished?

The purpose of this paper is to discuss (1) principles for program development, (2) roadblocks and strategies, (3) criteria for assessing the impact of programs, and (4) state influence in program development.

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* The preceding section draws on the New England Board of Higher Education's report entitled, "The Impact of Economic Globalization on Higher Education," Staff Paper III, December, 1987, by Sven Groennings.

Invited address at the American Forum on Education and International Competence, St. Louis, May 14, 1988.

Principles for Program Development

The principles to be used at any particular campus will depend upon the goals and objectives established. Will the areas of emphasis be general education, selected majors, area studies, foreign language proficiency and culture? Or will the goal be to make global education pervasive throughout the curriculum? Is the goal based on an institutional desire to keep up with fundamental industrial, technological and social trends in the U.S., or on a need for competitive parity, or distinctiveness, with other institutions?

At Ramapo College, we developed a strategy which gives emphasis to the international and multicultural dimensions of nearly all fields of study for reasons of institutional mission, identity and distinctiveness, and relevance.

International and multicultural education was chosen as the strategic direction for Ramapo not only because the new president believed strongly that every college graduate should be globally literate and the recipient of a broad liberal arts education, but also because Ramapo College has a distinct set of assets and opportunities which suggest that this should be the direction to take in strengthening institutional distinctiveness and attractiveness.

In developing a strategy, it is necessary not only to assess assets and opportunities, but also to develop a set of principles for decision-making.

At Ramapo we decided on the following principles to guide us in developing our identity as the "college of choice for a global education."

1. We decided that our strategy should include both international and multicultural themes. After all, the U.S. is part of the world, and we have a great diversity of ethnic groups and nationalities in our midst. It is just as important that our students understand the composition and diversity of American society as it is for them to appreciate diversity in the world.

2. We also decided that our theme of international and multicultural education should be pervasive throughout the curriculum, in professional studies such as accounting and social work as well as in general education and area studies. (After all, if accounting is the systematic assignment of value to assets, and if values and assets differ around the world, then our business students should study comparative accounting.) We decided on an integrative approach that would make it possible for all programs to be included and not limit our efforts to particular majors.

3. Our strategy includes the extracurriculum as well as the curriculum, courses in subject matter as well as in skill areas. Our efforts touch all areas of campus life, including housing, urban internships, field study, overseas exchanges, etc.

4. Our strategic mission embraces research and training as well as undergraduate teaching. There is an important role for our faculty to play through its scholarly activities and work with graduate students through our Faculty Fellows program. Accomplishments of our goals for international and multicultural education will be affected by all these activities.

5. Our program is being developed through campus expertise as well as through partnerships with others, including universities, cultural organizations, and corporations, whose expertise lies in different areas. In this manner, the sum of what we do can be greater than the total of the individual parts.*

It is obvious that faculty renewal and development is essential to these objectives, and underlies these principles.

Roadblocks and Strategies

But aren't there roadblocks to such developments? Aren't there structural impediments to change? Doesn't faculty inertia inhibit change? Isn't money the lubricant of change, and isn't it in short supply--even for a noble cause such as international and multicultural education?

The answer to each question can be "yes," of course. But for reasons of institutional parity and competitiveness, as well as for reasons of educational relevance--and all the other reasons cited earlier--colleges and universities must incorporate the international and multicultural dimensions of various fields of study into the curriculum.

One of the advantages and attractions of this change is that it can be inclusive of all faculty; it is not the exclusive domain of just a few in a precious center of study. But even with these attractions, the change to increased international and multicultural programming requires a strategic plan and process. As with any plan, this strategy requires goals and objectives which attract the professional interests of faculty; a set of principles for the development of new programs which can attract the philosophic commitment of faculty, and a planning process which attracts the involvement and political commitment of faculty. With expertise identified and commitments understood, funds can be sought with greater assurance. And we can attest to the possibilities.

We established six broad objectives for our efforts, including (1) professional development for faculty and staff, such as consultants, visiting scholars, etc., (2) curriculum development, including released time for revising current courses and developing new courses, (3) international telecommunications capability, including teleconferences, (4) experiential learning, including theme dorms, study abroad and urban internships, (5) partnerships with schools, colleges, community organizations and corporations, and (6) the recruitment and retention of international and minority students.

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* "Developing an Institutional Strategy for International Education: Principles, Objectives, and Progress," Robert A. Scott, based on a presentation at the Higher Educational International Leadership Summit, S.S. Universe, January 23, 1987.

Criteria for Assessing the Impact of Programs

No matter how limited or pervasive the programming is to be, assessment should be designed into it from the beginning. We need to know the impact of the plan on faculty, the curriculum and extracurriculum, and students.

At the more general level, we need to assess (1) the continuing commitment of the Board of Trustees and the president to achieving the objectives, , (2) the role of faculty as the major determinants of the substance and quality of the programs, (3) the recruitment and retention of faculty essential to the programs, (4) the centrality of international and multicultural education to both general and professional studies, and (5) the curricular and extracurricular opportunities for students to develop attitudes, skills, and knowledge that are consistent with the modern world and that prepare them for citizenship and careers.

At a more specific level, we need to assess actual progress toward specific goals and objectives. At Ramapo, this means an assessment of (1) the number of faculty and staff who participate in professional development, and (2) the consequences of that experience, (3) the member of relevant courses revised or added, (4) enrollment in courses related to the goals and objectives, (5) the development of our international telecommunications center, (6) the number and quality of study abroad and urban internship programs, and (7) the number of students participating, (8) the number, quality, and productivity of partnerships with schools, business and community groups, and (9) the number and quality of minority and international students recruited and retained.

State Influence in Program Development

Assessment is important not only because it makes sense to do, but also because an increasing number of states are initiating various forms of program and "outcomes" assessment. But this is not the only way in which states can have an influence or role in developing global education programs.

Several states have issued reports with recommendations concerning the need for schools and colleges to pay more attention to global education both for its own sake in preparing well-informed citizens as well as in relationship to international business (import and export) interests. In addition to business, states have interests in agriculture, marine science, and environmental issues which are international in nature. Some states also have international border concerns.

Therefore, nearly all institutional initiatives for global education can be placed in a state or national context, and connections to policy initiatives and funding sources can be made.

Our initiatives at Pamapo have been supported generously by a state program whose purpose was to encourage institutional plans to raise quality and achieve distinctiveness. We chose the strategy for international and multicultural education because of existing strengths and prospective opportunities. And now we are in a much better position to request grant funds from other state, federal, and private sources.

Conclusion

All institutions should be considering how they will incorporate global education into the curriculum, whether for reasons of state and national competitiveness, institutional competitiveness, or local adjustment to students from new ethnic groups. The degree of program development will depend upon the goals and mission of the campus. Whether focussed or pervasive, the programs should be built on strengths and related to campus mission as well as to opportunities. As with any other strategic development, global education at colleges and universities must be based on goals, principles, and priorities. If we are successful, we will no longer have to speak of global education, because it will become the norm--as it should be.